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ENG 4775-001: Literature, Culture, Theory

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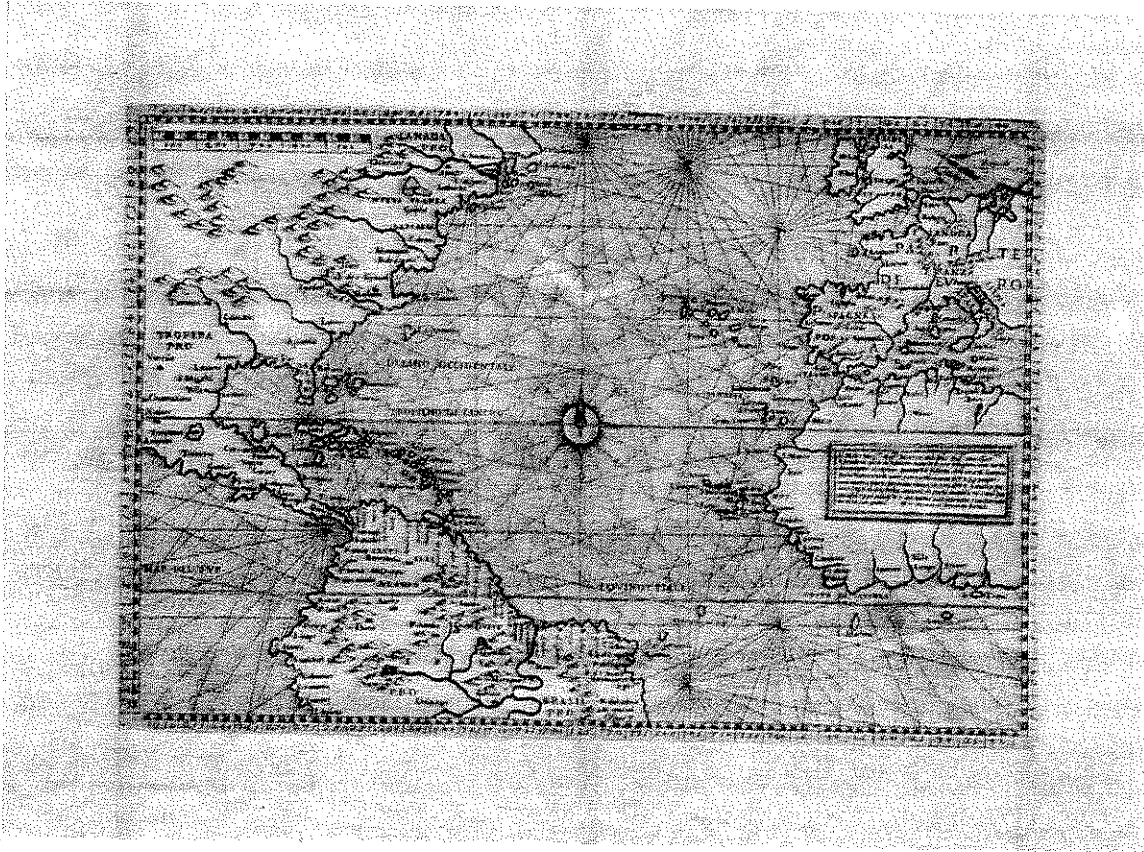
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DISCOURSES OF THE TRANS-
Studies in Literature, Culture, Theory
English 4775 / 3 credit hours
Spring 2016 / TTh 12:30 – 13:45 / Coleman 3160

Professor: C.C. Wharram
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Map of the North Atlantic, ca. 1565, Venice

ENG 4775: Discourses of the Trans-

This course introduces students to the ways that **theory** can assist in (and sometimes complicate) the study of **literature** and **culture**. By focusing specifically on theories that address how texts move from place to place, in and through history and between peoples, we will introduce ourselves to many of the thought-provoking and influential forms of theory that have developed over the course of the last few centuries.

This course will focus on some developments in theories of mediation (discourses of the “trans-”) as they relate to literary and cultural studies. We will be discussing the ways in which “mediation” challenges and disrupts many of the presuppositions of literary scholarship by focusing on some of the following problems in the field: the anthology/canon/archive as medium of “culture;” the role of “translation” in recent philosophical and sociological schools of thought such as object-oriented ontology and

actor-network theory; cultural and technological “interfaces”; trans-gendering as a disruptor of gender norms; the translator as cultural, linguistic, and historical mediator; national literatures within a transnational (or “planetary”) context; intercultural “transference.”

There has been a sudden and profound attraction in the realms of literary theory and cultural studies to “discourses of the trans-.” Are we now in a transformative “Age of the Trans-”? What might that mean?

Our readings may include excerpts from some of the following theorists:

Bruno Latour, Emily Apter, Ian Bogost, Roberto Esposito, Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, Germaine de Staël, J.W. von Goethe, Walter Benjamin, Marshall McLuhan, Homi Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gayatri Spivak, Timothy Morton, Julia Kristeva.

Until 2015, this course was called “Literary and Cultural Criticism and Theory.” We will discuss during the semester the word placed under erasure in the new title: ~~criticism~~.

The purpose of the course is to equip students with an array of theoretical methods for the study of literature and culture. We hope to offer a survey of the most important and influential literary and cultural approaches, though we cannot hope to address all of them. Furthermore, some theorists are difficult to categorize as belonging to one specific camp or method. By the time the course is complete, students should feel prepared to tackle the discourse of literary and cultural theory on their own.

From the EIU Course Catalog: ENG 4775 - Literature, Culture, Theory.

Basic principles of evaluating the standard literary genres, or tenets of a specific school of criticism, or the examination of major aesthetic questions. Topics to be announced. (Group 5) WI Prerequisites and Notes: ENG 1002G. May be repeated once with permission of the Department Chairperson. Credits: 3

Texts

Rivkin, Julie, and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory, an Anthology*.

Biguenet, John, and Rainer Schulte, eds. *Theories of Translation*.

Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner, eds. *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*.

Grossman, Edith. *Why Translation Matters*.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*.

Novalis. *Philosophical Writings*.

Venuti, Lawrence, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*.

Other texts will be made available electronically, through D2L.

Requirements

Quizzes, taken via D2L	0% (but required)
Participation	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Summary Paper	10%
Final Writing Project	30%
Final Exam	20%



Midterm Exam

The Midterm Exam will consist of two sections: a series of terms for theoretical concepts we have learned during the first half of the semester, and a series of brief passages from our readings. You will be asked to explain the terms and, if applicable, identify (author and title of work) their significance. You will need to identify and comment briefly upon the excerpted passages. Each section will be worth 10% of your final grade. The Midterm will be taken in class.

Occasional Quizzes and Final Exam

Occasionally, before our Monday class meeting, you will complete a brief quiz online through the D2L learning-management system. Most of the questions will be fact-based to determine how closely you have read materials and listened to class lectures and discussions. Most of the questions will be written to let you know the facts I think you should retain in order to learn well in this course and in the future (both as an English major and generally as an educated human being). You must complete the quiz before the deadline I give you not be penalized. Your grade for the course will be in no way determined by your performance on these quizzes, other than the penalty you will incur for not completing them on time. However, **Part One of the Final Exam** will consist of questions from the quizzes only. Therefore, this section of your Final Exam will consist only of questions you have already seen. In order to do well on the Final Exam (and in the course, generally), I recommend that you complete the quizzes we have already done from time to time in order to remind yourself of the important facts we have covered in the course.

Part Two of the Final Exam will consist of a series of terms (usually, theoretical concepts) we have learned during the semester. You will be asked to explain the terms and, if applicable, identify (author and title of work) their significance. Each section will be worth 10% of your final grade. The Final Exam will take place on **Wednesday, May 4 at 08:00**.

Participation

Your Course Participation grade will be determined through a demerit system. You will begin with 20 points, representing 20% of your final grade. **For every class you miss**, you will lose 1 percentage point (i.e., four absences equals 4 points equals 16/20; three absences equals 3 points equals 17/20). Being late for class will count for 0.5 percentage points. If you miss more than six classes, you will be missing more than 20% of the course meetings, and it is very unlikely (almost unheard of, at EIU) that you will pass the course. If you find yourself in a situation that is causing you to miss classes, please discuss the situation with me as soon as possible, and we will work on finding ways for you to remain in the course, if we can. Occasionally, I will ask you to complete a small assignment on D2L (a quiz, a short writing task) to be completed for the next class period. **For every quiz/task you fail to complete in a timely manner**, you will lose a point (i.e., two missed classes and two missed tasks equals 16/20). Also, I will ask each of you to **prepare one or two questions** for our class discussions on Thursday based on our reading for that day and the Monday lecture. If you are absent or have no questions prepared, you will receive a one-point demerit. Please contact me if you have an intervening emergency.

Final Writing Project

As the semester progresses, I will meet with you individually so that together we may develop a topic for your final writing project. This project will apply theoretical thinking to a text of your choosing.

Summary/Rationale

In the first half of the semester, after some one-on-one discussion, I will ask you to choose a text that you would be interested to write about using one or more theoretical approaches. Your first assignment toward the goal of the written paper will be to write a short summary (**minimum** 750 words) of the text you will analyze. Included in this summary will be a rationale for regarding this text as suited for theoretical analysis. (That is, I want you to explain why you think “theory” will assist in reading the text you have selected.)

Proposal/Abstract for your theoretical approach

Nearing the end of the semester, I will ask you for a brief paper explaining the theoretical approach(es) you have determined to use in your analysis. You might think of this assignment as a project proposal or an “abstract” outlining what your final paper will entail. This assignment will have a 350-word **maximum**, and will be shared with the other students in the class.

Final Writing Project

I will continue to give you more specific instructions during the semester, but for now, you will want to know that the final paper should be at least 7-pages in length. By mid-semester you should have a solid sense of the topic for your final paper, and will have presented me with a preliminary description of your chosen text. The breakdown for the entire project will be as follows: Summary/Rationale (10%), Proposal/Abstract (5%), Final Product (25%).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this course is to introduce you—through reading, writing, and discussion—to the study of literature, culture, and theory. In this course, I expect that you will:

- be introduced to some important writers and movements from the history of literary and cultural theory;
- gain an awareness of some of the major modern theoretical schools of thought;
- communicate effectively in both oral and written transmissions;
- reflect upon your own considerations about “literature” and “culture,” “media” and “translation” while considering the viewpoints and arguments of others;
- develop basic strategies used by theorists of literature and culture such as attentive reading practices, research into previous critical and theoretical analyses, and effective argument;
- economically incorporate and correctly document sources of ideas and information.

COURSE POLICIES

LATE POLICY

Essays are due at the beginning of class. Late essays will be marked a full grade lower for every day late. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero.” In-class writing assignments and quizzes must be turned in by the end of class, and cannot be “made up” at a later date. If you have reason to believe you will be incapable of completing an assignment on time, please speak to me as soon as possible.

EMAILING POLICY

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you stop by my office during office hours (or other scheduled times) so that we can talk. Don't be afraid to talk to me after class about setting up a time to discuss the readings, the assignments, or anything else you 'd like to talk about. However, **DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN "UPDATE" ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE.**

ESSAY FORMAT

Your paper should be paper-clipped. It must include page numbers. Format: 12-point Garamond font (or similar), double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Always submit your papers using correct MLA (Modern Language Association) format.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade on the assignment, if not for the course. I will follow the departmental policy on plagiarism:

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work' (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Academic integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as de-fined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be re-ported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

A General Overview — subject to revision

Module I: A Basic Introduction to Theory and Translation (2 wks)
Grossman, *Why Translation Matters* (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Goethe, "Translations" (*Theories of Translation* 60)

Staël, "The Spirit of Translation(s)"

(<http://www.rc.umd.edu/pedagogies/commons/translation/commons.2014.translation.wharram.html>)

Berman, "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign" (Venuti 276)

Module II: Transforming the Self (Inoculation and Immunity) (3 wks.)

Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy" (D2L)

Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas* and *Bios* (excerpts, D2L)

William Wordsworth, "Lines written on the seat of a yew-tree" (D2L)

Module III: Transforming Language (2 wks)

Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" (Rivkin 59)

Jacques Derrida, "Différance" (Rivkin 278)

Module IV: The Transference of Others (3 wks.)

Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams" (Rivkin 397)

Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (Rivkin 418)

Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" and "Women on the Market" (Rivkin 795 and 799)

bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" (MCS 308)

Heinrich von Kleist, "The Foundling" (D2L)

Module V: Global Translations (4 wks.)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" (Venuti 369)

Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders" (Rivkin 1167)

Jésus Martin-Barbero, "The Processes: From Nationalisms to Transnationalisms" (MCS 545)

Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Globalization as Hybridization" (MCS 567)

Wharram / English 4775-001: *Schedule of Classes*—subject to revision

Rivkin = *Literary Theory, an Anthology* (edited by Rivkin and Ryan)

Keywords = *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works* (edited by Durham and Kellner)

Venuti = *The Translation Studies Reader* (edited by Lawrence Venuti)

For each class period, you need to have carefully read and be prepared to discuss the assigned selections in their entirety.

WEEK ONE

T 1/12 **INTRODUCTION: "DISCOURSES OF THE TRANS-."**

TH 1/14 Maurice Sedlak, *Where the Wild Things Are* (D2L)

Grossman, *Why Translation Matters* (Introduction and Chapter 1)

WEEK TWO

T 1/19 Goethe, "Translations" (*Theories of Translation* 60)

Staël, "The Spirit of Translation(s)" (handout and link on D2L)

TH 1/21 Berman, "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign" (Venuti 276)

Friday 9/4—Deadline to drop course without charge/grade
